

EL Parent Survey Results

The English Learner Department of the Washoe County School District is proposing to no longer have designated “English Learner” (EL) teachers who only teach students learning English in Elementary School. Instead, WCSD will have “English Learning Development Facilitators” at schools who help provide all teachers in the regular classroom with tools and resources on how to support students learning English.

All families (N = 8,844) whose children receive English Learning services were sent a link to a survey via Connect Ed (phone, email, and/or text) to provide feedback about this change. The survey was open from February 24th to March 2nd. Families were provided with a brief description of the new ELD facilitator model, and were informed that the current English Learner teachers will be reassigned into these new positions, or will be reassigned into different teaching positions districtwide if passed. A total of 1,278 families (response rate = 15%) responded to the survey, with 54% (n=687) choosing to take the survey in Spanish and 46% (n=591) choosing to take the survey in English. This brief report provides the frequencies of the responses to each of the 10 questions included in the EL parent survey.

Is your child currently receiving English Learner supports?			
		%	Responses
	Yes	54.5%	n=620
	No	19.7%	n=224
	Not Sure	28.8%	n=293
TOTAL			n=1,137

In what grade level do you have a child in EL services? (select all that apply)			
		%	Responses
	Elementary	39%	n=505
	Middle	11%	n=148
	High	7%	n=93
	Not Sure If They Receive Services	7%	n=89
TOTAL			n=835

Does your child currently have a separate English Learner teacher, or do they receive most or all services in their regular classroom from their regular classroom teacher?			
		%	Responses
	Yes, they have a separate English Learner teacher	35%	n=245
	No, they receive most or all services in the regular classroom	33%	n=230
	Not sure	32%	n=227
TOTAL			n=702

Overall, do you think WCSD should have dedicated English Learner teachers, or should WCSD have English Learner Development facilitators at schools to support regular classroom teachers with English Learning supports for students?			
		%	Responses
	WCSD should continue to have dedicated English Learner teachers who directly teach students learning English	55.3%	n=386
	WCSD should have English Learner Development facilitators to help regular classroom teachers support students learning English	36.0%	n=251
	Not sure	8.7%	n=61
TOTAL			n=698

Overall, how satisfied have you been with your child's progress learning English at school?			
		%	Responses
	Completely satisfied	36.3%	n=250
	Mostly satisfied	35.8%	n=247
	Somewhat satisfied	23.9%	n=165
	Not at all Satisfied	3.9%	n=27
TOTAL			n=689

How satisfied are you with updates you receive from your child's school about your child's progress in learning English?			
		%	Responses
	Completely satisfied	30.3%	n=210
	Mostly satisfied	36.6%	n=253
	Somewhat satisfied	26.3%	n=182
	Not at all satisfied	6.8%	n=47
TOTAL			n=692

Qualitative Questions

Families were asked four open-ended questions about EL services and the proposed change to EL programming. Major themes for each question are presented, along with example quotes to help illustrate each theme.

1. What successes has your child had participating in EL services, if any?

(N = 313)

- *Student has become better reader/writer/speaker, or has become more confident speaking English as a result of EL services (~81%):*

- “Her vocabulary has expanded and she is more fluent in English.”
- “It is beneficial to them. It helps them with ways to understand work they may not understand in a regular class.”
- “Made more friends and less shy.”
- “They have gained confidence to speak English and participate in class without being embarrassed that classmates would laugh at them.”
- “He understands a conversation better.”
- ***Child has not improved or family is unsure about child’s progress because of lack of communication from school (~15%):***
 - “My child’s teacher doesn’t reply back to me.”
 - “I am not sure as development is not communicated to me from the EL teacher. I know both my kids participated in EL, but I am not sure what the focus is on to be honest.”
 - “I don’t feel they need EL in high school anymore, but they’re still in EL.”
 - “Minimal now given distance learning.”
 - “Have not improved.”
 - “[Child] is part of EL but has never received any services, nor have we requested or wanted any services.”

2. What challenges have you or your child experienced with EL services, if any?

(N =263)

- ***Student is still struggling with learning English, especially because of distance learning (~39%):***
 - “He was tested like all the other kids which English is their [native language], put into charts, and feeling unsuccessful all the time.”
 - “Reading and grammar.”
 - “Speaking too little.”
 - “My son has missed so much that has made him not want to go to school. He feels the pandemic and distance learning has made it so difficult to learn.”
 - “Writing.”
 - “When they read, the homework books are in English.”
- ***Communication with the school is difficult because of language barriers between family and school staff (~9%):***
 - “It is a challenge to contact teachers and receive support.”
 - “How they treat my son not knowing that much English.”
 - “I would like a direct line where I can ask how my child is doing or some journal communication with the teachers to know if I can do something else. COVID and schedules make it really hard to be in Zoom conferences.”
 - “I don’t have regular updates or communication from the EL teacher on my child’s progress in the program.”

- “I never knew for sure if my children were receiving direct education with regards to English as a Second Language.”
- “When my daughter was designated as an EL in school, she started refusing to speak our second language at home. She saw the time away from the classroom as punishment.”
- ***Family has no challenges and is happy with child’s learning (~12%):***
 - “His progress has been very remarkable when expressing himself.”
 - “My child has progressed a lot, when he started in kindergarten he did not speak English, only Spanish. Thank you for all your effort and dedication.”

3. What suggestions do you have to improve how EL services are provided, if any?

(N = 263)

- ***Family believes child needs more English language support, especially from dedicated EL teachers (~60%):***
 - “This is the first time my son can’t receive support from an ESL teacher. He is struggling. He really needs help.”
 - “More teachers for one on one learning.”
 - “Extra materials and videos to help students learn English quicker.”
 - “I think that the school should secure as many EL teachers as possible.”
 - “More time or teacher dedicated to English with them.”
 - “Focus more on the English language.”
 - “More bilingual teachers.”
 - “That they continue to teach [EL] classes separately.”
- ***Better communication from the school about students’ progress learning English (~12%):***
 - “I would suggest that communication be more accessible between parents and English teachers.”
 - “The teacher needs to send out progress reports to the parents letting them know what their child still needs work on.”
 - “I want to hear more from teachers about my child’s progress and ideas on how to support improving his proficiency. There is no information other than letters coming from the school, but this is not enough to help me understand and support my parent.”
- ***Family wants child removed from English Services or not provided at some grade levels (~2%)***
 - “I appreciate the support but having them taken out of regular class to get this support might actually be counteractive for some students.”
 - “Classroom with the regular teacher would be more accessible for kids to get help and get out of this program.”

- “My daughter has been in services for a few years, but speaks English as her first language fluently, and just continues to take the test. She misses it by .1.”
- “I feel you should try to only have EL in elementary, so kids are done with it by junior high.”

4. What questions do you have about the proposed change to English Learner services, if any?

(N = 121)

Families posed a total of 121 questions to the district about the proposed change, which can broadly be categorized into the following (in rough order of most frequently to least frequently asked):

- Why is this a more effective approach?
- I don’t understand what a facilitator is and what the change will be. What is the difference?
- Regular classroom teachers already have too much on their plates. How will they accommodate this change as well?
- Will my child receive less help now that they are not receiving one on one support?
- How will you determine which classrooms receive help from facilitators?
- How will you better communicate to families in households that are bilingual? Why hasn’t there been any communication to families about this change until now?
- Does this change apply to high school?
- What will my child’s schedule look like if they aren’t receiving dedicated EL services any longer?
- Why would you take away opportunities to learn English?
- Why do regular teachers need someone else to teach them how to support EL students?
- What is the general district plan for helping students learn English throughout their k-12 career?
- Will EL students still receive small group time and English language support?